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It's a real pleasure to meet with you in Orlando today. It gives me a chance to escape the cold and ice that have plagued Washington, D.C., for the last several weeks. And I always enjoy meeting with people from the private sector, the businesses that are affected by EPA's actions.

I must admit: the private sector does not always greet me with great affection and enthusiasm. Private companies often see EPA as an adversary that is trying to impose costs on them and make it tougher to do business. Sometimes EPA's actions do increase the cost of doing business, particularly when we put on our regulatory hat. I know that some of the companies represented here today have been working with EPA to soften the effects of safe drinking water regulations on owners of multi-family housing. From what I hear, our response has satisfied many of your members.

But today I want to talk about another aspect of EPA. A large and growing part of our activities are non-regulatory. In many cases we work hand-in-hand with private businesses in voluntary efforts that protect the environment, reduce the use of natural resources, and often improve profitability. In such cases you and I are partners. We work together to achieve common goals. In other words, EPA's goal of protecting the environment and the free market's goal of allocating resources efficiently in pursuit of profitability are sometimes very much in sync.

And that's my message to you today: EPA and the forces of free-market capitalism may seem, at first glance, to be strange bedfellows. But when it comes to cleaning up the air and the water and protecting the land, we are bedfellows indeed.

Look, for example, at the drinking water issue that I mentioned a second ago. You have your own business reasons for wanting to sub-meter water usage in multi-family housing, and those reasons have to do with profitability. EPA is solidly in favor of sub-metering water usage, because measuring water usage at the individual unit level is a necessary pre-requisite to achieving full-cost and conservation pricing. People simply will not take the personal actions needed to conserve water usage until they know exactly how much they're paying for their water.

At EPA, we see water conservation as an integral part of watershed protection, particularly in arid and drought-stricken areas. Moreover, by helping to ensure in-stream flows, water conservation helps protect aquatic ecosystems. Clearly, the sub-metering of water usage helps both of us meet our goals.

There are many more examples, and one of the best is energy conservation. Your association supports the sub-metering of electricity for the same reasons that you sub-meter water. EPA applauds both, because both provide the indispensable underpinning to natural resource conservation.

Energy conservation has been a priority at EPA for more than a decade. Since about 1990 EPA has been working with product manufacturers to increase the availability and performance of energy efficient consumer products like light bulbs, computers, refrigerators, and TVs. Our Energy Star program has been remarkably successful raising the public visibility of energy-efficient products and the companies that manufacture them. The Energy Star you find attached to a range of consumer products is one of the most widely-recognized government-sponsored labels in the country today.

Just one example of the success of Energy Star: the "sleep" function on computers. You all know what that is – your computer screen goes dark after a few

minutes when not it use. But you may not know that this simply-programmed feature, which saves enormous amounts of energy every year, resulted from a partnership between EPA and computer manufacturers.

EPA initiated this effort and a dozen others like it because we knew that energy conservation was critically important to the future of air quality in this country. Even better, energy efficient technologies usually pay for themselves in terms of lower energy bills. Here again the goals of EPA and the marketplace closely mesh.

I've talked about water and energy conservation, and how important they are in helping EPA achieve water and air quality goals. Now I'd like to tell you about some other EPA programs. And I have to admit, these are programs in which I take a special, personal pride.

As you know, I'm EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. That means I'm responsible, among other things, for taking care of the nation's garbage. There's probably a more delicate way to describe it, but that's the bottom line. I have to make sure that the nation's waste stream, whether household trash, construction debris, or hazardous industrial wastes, is disposed of in environmentally acceptable ways.

And it's not exactly a stream – it's more like a raging river. In 2001, Americans generated about 230 million tons of municipal solid waste a year, or about 4.4 pounds per person per day. It's no doubt gone up a lot since then. Beyond that, the nation's industrial, commercial, and manufacturing processes generate about 7.6 billion tons of waste per year. About 33 million personal computers were replaced by businesses and households in 2002, and that number is expected to jump to 70 million by next year. That's more than double the number in three years! And I've read that over 100 million cell phones will be thrown away next year.

Where does all this trash go? In the case of the computers and cell phones, about a third of it ends up in my garage at home. At least that's what it looks like when I try to park the car. But in reality most of it is headed to a trash dump or incinerator near you.

UNLESS we can find ways to recycle or reuse it. We do a pretty good job of that in this country, but the sheer magnitude of the waste stream begs an important question: can we shrink the waste stream so disposal costs are reduced, natural resources are conserved, and – in the best of worlds – profitability improves?

When I took the EPA job, one of the first things I dove into was the river of America's waste. In my first year I set up a program called the Resource Conservation Challenge. Its goal was to promote materials recycling and reuse, reduce the use of toxic chemicals, and conserve energy and materials. Most important, the RCC was designed to be a flexible, voluntary program with measurable goals. We intended to reach those goals through innovative, tailored partnerships with the businesses that generated the wastes, and anyone who reused them. In other words, these are non-regulatory partnerships predicated on mutual interests and cooperation.

I'm proud to say that a number of these partnerships have been established, ambitious goals have been set, and in some cases we're already seeing results. Let me mention just a few.

Our Coal Combustion Products Partnership (or C2P2) encourages generators and users of coal combustion products like coal ash to increase the use of those products in highway and building construction. Over 100 companies have signed up for C2P2. They're committed to increasing the environmentally safe use of coal ash in concrete from 14 million metric tons in 2001 to 20 million metric tons in 2010. Our Plug-In to eCycling project is working with electronics manufacturers, retailers, and recyclers –

including Sony, Sharp, Panasonic, Dell, Intel, and Best Buy – to recycle and reuse discarded electronics. Last year our Plug-In partners safely recycled over 12 million tons of used electronic equipment. We’ve set up a tires partnership that is committed, by 2008, to diverting 85 percent of newly-generated scrap tires to reuse, recycling, or energy recovery, and reducing existing stockpiles of used tires by 55 percent.

And here’s a good example of how these partnerships can be used to “target” very specific wastes. I couldn’t resist the pun. We’ve set up a partnership with shooting ranges to recapture and reuse lead shot. Across the United States, about 9,000 shooting ranges deposit about 100 million pounds of lead into the environment each year. So far, our partners have agreed to use Best Management Practices to collect shot at over 100 of those ranges.

This is just a small sampling of the kinds of voluntary programs in place at EPA that encourage the reuse, and thereby the conservation, of natural resources. These programs are good for the environment, and they’re good for business. As long as I’m at EPA, I’m going to push for these kinds of public/private partnerships as hard as I can. They may be the single most important key to our nation’s long-term environmental protection.

I’ve believed that for a long time, and my beliefs were reinforced last year during my four-month stint as Acting Administrator for EPA. That was undoubtedly the most exciting, instructive, captivating experience of my professional life. For one thing, I got to take part in a lot of cool, inside-Washington stuff. Like sitting in on Cabinet meetings and flying with the President on Air Force One. But nothing lifted me in the eyes of my family like being interviewed by the Weather Channel.

From a professional perspective, the experience was invaluable. I had the rare opportunity to see how environmental policy works – and doesn’t work – across of

broad spectrum of issues. As Acting Administrator I was immersed in several contentious, controversial issues that typify EPA's traditional way of doing business. That is, we identify a pollutant of concern, determine the major sources that emit it, and then try to reduce the risks through an "end-of-pipe" technology that limits emissions into the air, water, or land. Controlling mercury in the air and arsenic in drinking water are just two recent examples of this traditional, regulatory activity.

But there are some serious problems associated with command-and-control regulations. One is the point I just made about energy and resource conservation. That is, pollution management in many cases may not be as effective as materials management. Using input materials like energy more efficiently, using less toxic materials, recycling and reusing waste materials: these kinds of techniques often lead to substantial environmental benefits at much lower costs. Sometimes they even pay for themselves. And that's why we support ideas like the sub-metering of water and electricity.

Another problem associated with command-and-control regulations is the contentious nature of the government/business dynamic. During my time in the Administrator's office, I was exposed as never before to the adversarial and litigious rancor often associated with EPA's regulatory actions. This contentiousness undoubtedly springs from the command-and-control nature of regulations. No one likes to be told what to do, especially if what they're told to do – from their perspective – makes little sense. What's worse, environmental progress driven by regulations is slow and painful, because inevitably there's a lot of sand in the gears of the regulatory system.

In voluntary partnerships, on the other hand, government and business work together to manage input materials more efficiently and effectively. EPA identifies

problems, sets targets of opportunity, and then lets business put its unparalleled technical expertise to work hitting those targets. Protecting the environment becomes cooperative instead of coercive. Because of this fundamentally altered dynamic, we can often hit our risk reduction targets much more quickly and at less cost than we could using traditional regulations.

Let me close by telling you of one particular partnership program that may hold a special interest for the developers of multi-family housing. And that's the Land Revitalization Agenda.

One of my other responsibilities at EPA is to clean up contaminated property like Superfund sites, leaking underground storage tanks, old municipal waste dumps, and contaminated lots in America's urban centers. EPA's been doing that for over 20 years under several different legislative authorities.

But for the last few years we've begun doing something new: cleaning up sites with an eye to their redevelopment and reuse after cleanup. This may not sound like much of a change, but inside the Agency it's almost revolutionary, because the links between environmental protection and economic growth are so explicit.

Contaminated sites are a blight on communities because they degrade the environment and threaten human health. They're an economic blight as well. For health, safety, or liability reasons, contaminated sites are often fenced off, gated, inaccessible – a kind of community quarantine. And the blight is contagious: like the proverbial rotten apple, a contaminated site can spoil the value of the property around it. Whole neighborhoods can deteriorate over time, with families moving and land values falling, because a single property is known to be contaminated.

But the contagious blight of contamination can be reversed. When sites are cleaned up AND the land put back to use, the heartbeat of the community revives.

For the last decade or so, EPA has tested the idea of community revitalization in all of our cleanup programs. And everywhere we see the same results. More constructive community involvement, because people look forward to the parks and housing and shopping centers that will rejuvenate a previously contaminated site and the community around it. Stronger partnerships between government, private developers, and community organizations, because everyone wins when a neighborhood springs back to life. More sensible cleanup plans, because they can be tailored to accommodate planned future uses. Easier access to funding, because cleanup money is seen as an investment with a stream of future returns.

Because the partnerships, planning, and funding are targeted at future potential, not past failures, the contamination often is cleaned up more quickly. And faster cleanups means faster cuts in health risks, and faster increases in jobs and tax revenues. We have seen it happen again and again across the country: a once contaminated site comes back to life as a retail complex, a community park or sports field, a transportation center, or multi-family housing.

This may be the most interesting news you take from my speech today. Contaminated properties in your communities back home may be potential profit centers for multi-family housing developers willing to work with community organizations and governments during the cleanup process. Just one more example of EPA and the marketplace making strange, but surprisingly compatible, bedfellows.

Thank you.